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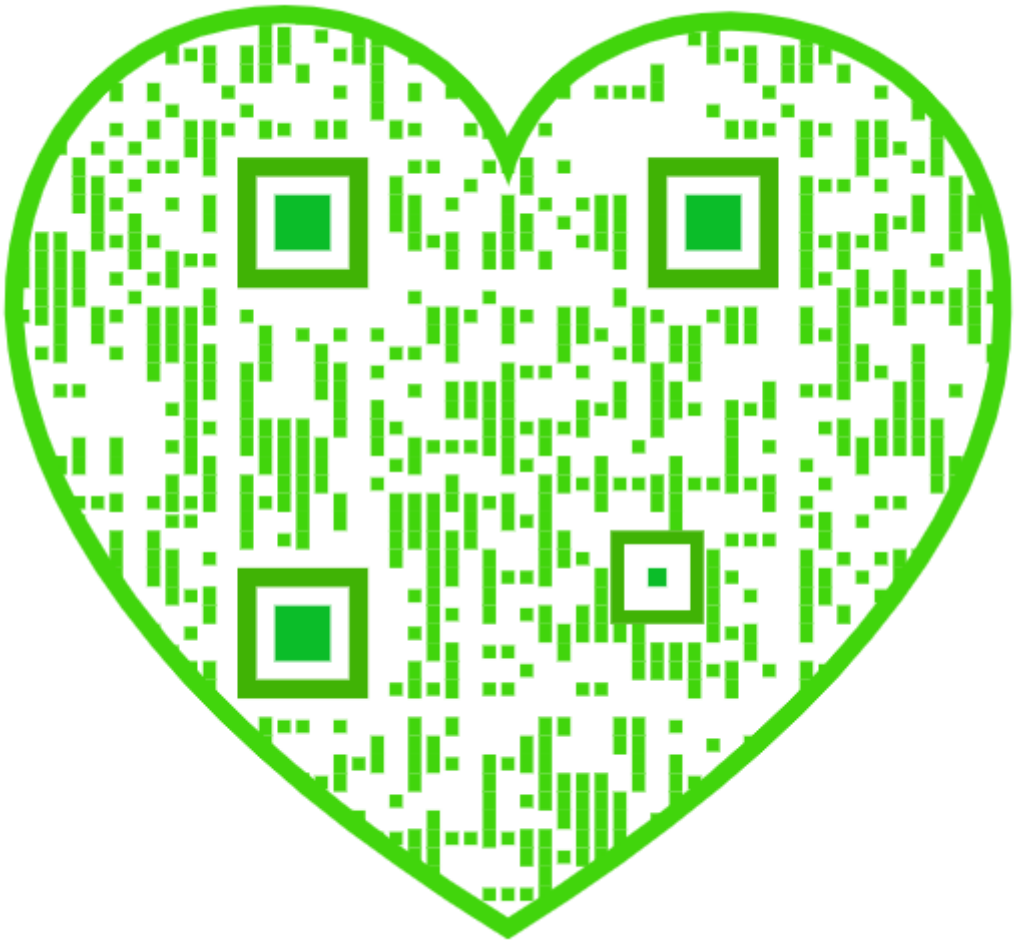
THE TEACHING OF PENMANSHIP

A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS

HARRY HOUSTON
NEW HAVEN, CONN.



THE TEACHING

OF

PENMANSHIP

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HOUSTON'S WRITING LESSONS

A GUIDE FOR RATING AND CORRECTING HANDWRITING

THE TEACHING OF PENMANSHIP

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By

HARRY HOUSTON

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Foreword

The purpose of this Manual is to help teachers get good results in writing with a minimum amount of time and effort. An endeavor has been made to apply pedagogical principles to the teaching of this subject. The aim has been to make the plans fit children of various stages of mental and physical ability rather than to make one plan for all. The methods presented are not the result of any preconceived notions of teaching this subject. They are the result of years of work in city, country, and Normal schools, where conditions are different from those in schools where writing is treated as a special subject.

The ability of teachers to do the work required of pupils has received considerable attention, but the main part of the Manual has been devoted to the art of teaching and supervising this subject.

If there is any merit in the methods presented, it is due to studying pedagogy rather than fancy penmanship; to a thorough acquaintance with the conditions under which teachers in the public schools must work; to the admirable coöperation of the many earnest and competent teachers and superintendents with whom it has been my privilege to work.

HARRY HOUSTON,

New Haven, Conn. *Supervisor of Penmanship.*

POSITION

Assume a straight front position, with feet flat on the floor.

At the signal "One", place elbows on desk, forearms in a vertical position. "Two", draw elbows off the desk, letting them down

about two inches, keeping forearms vertical. "Three", lower the

forearms and place hands upon desk near together. "Four", adjust paper to arm, making the sides of the paper parallel with the forearm. "Five", open ink-wells.

PENHOLDING

Raise the right forearm to a vertical position. Let the fingers fall as shown in cut. Place the end of the thumb against the first joint of the forefinger. Lower the hand to the desk several

times. The third and fourth fingers, folded under the hand a little, should support the hand and wrist and keep them free from the desk.

Insert the pencil between the thumb and the first and second finger. The point of the pen or pencil should protrude one inch beyond the end of the forefinger. The penholder should cross the

hand near the knuckle joint and point over the shoulder or upper arm.

Repeat the foregoing drills at the beginning of every writing lesson, and during the writing lesson whenever the muscles become tense or the penholding and position are poor. After sufficient drill has been given in this manner, some of the detailed directions may be omitted.

Impress upon the pupils the importance of relaxing the muscles and holding the pen without gripping it.

PUSH THE PAPER FORWARD

In order to maintain a good position and to use the arm movement, the paper must be pushed forward as the writing fills the page. Keep the right arm in correct position. With the left hand move the paper forward until the middle, the bottom, or any other part of the paper desired is directly under the pen. Hold the paper with the left hand, always placing it at the edge of the paper opposite the right hand. Drill upon this until pupils can readily adjust the paper to any desired position.

To make this habitual in all written exercises, have pupils omit temporarily two lines between words in writing spelling lessons, pushing the paper forward after each word is written. Repeat this process so as to use all of the paper.

The good position secured at the beginning of the writing lesson will disappear if the arms are not kept in position. The arms cannot be kept in correct position if the paper is not pushed forward. The upper arms serve as props holding the body in position. If either (or both) of these props is removed, the body will bend forward or sidewise. Copy books cannot be pushed forward

over the next seat. This makes the small Writing Lessons used with loose sheets of paper superior for securing good position and movement.

STARTING ARM MOVEMENT

Correct position and penholding, large movements, and quick motions are the most important points in starting arm movement writing. These are given in the order of importance. The writing machine must be set up properly according to the directions given. If the hand and wrist are free from the desk and the fleshy part of the arm, near the elbow, is made the point from which the writing machine is moved, arm movement is made easy.

Large movements compel the use of the arm. The fingers are not long enough to reach. This is why the long swinging movements are given first in Writing Lessons 1, 2 and 3. Enlarging any movement exercise helps to eliminate finger movement. Large movements, however, should be used only as a means of getting started, and should be abandoned for the smaller movements as soon as possible.

Quick motions do much to promote arm movement. If nothing is said about movement, and any movements are made with the utmost rapidity, it will be immediately evident that arm movement is being used. In starting, a sufficiently quick and vigorous movement should be used to secure the desired results. This excessive speed, however, should be used only as a means and should be reduced as soon as possible to a speed consistent with good form. Some depend too much on quick motions and develop a habit of scribbling.

The rates of speed for general practice are given in the Writing Lessons for a number of the copies. These are approximately correct, but they may be increased temporarily to secure better movement or diminished slightly to secure better form.

With the hand in position as indicated on page 6 (without pen or pencil), swing the hand to right and left across the page. Count *one, two; one, two; swing, swing;* or maintain the rhythm and give directions needed, such as: "Feet on the floor"; "Slide on the fingers", etc.

Next, repeat the above with pencil or pen, but without marking on the paper. Then pencils may be inverted for this drill. Finally, write on the paper, making the first exercise in Writing Lessons 1, 2 and 3. If a long swing is not made at first, pupils are likely

to let the forearm remain stationary, using a hand and wrist movement. One of the most important points in learning to write easily is the carrying of the hand, wrist and lower part of the forearm simultaneously across the page. Poor writers let the main part of the hand, wrist and forearm remain stationary while making a few letters, then hitch the hand along.

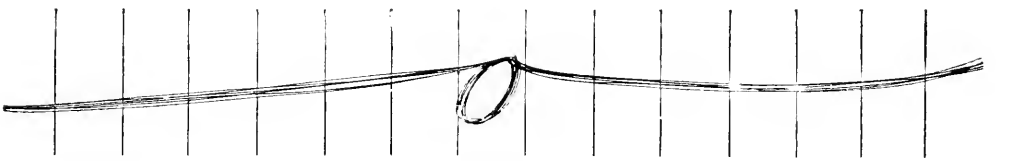
Gradually reduce the length of the swing by inserting letter forms far apart at first until the short swing from one letter to another can be made with the same movement as the long exercise.

ARM MOVEMENT IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

The work in arm movement for these grades consists mainly in training the hand and arm to move freely and easily across the page. There will be more or less finger action in forming the letters, particularly the loop and capital letters, but these drills, if persisted in at the beginning of every writing lesson, will train the writing machinery to move easily from left to right across the page, will give the writing an open, instead of a cramped appearance, and will do much to promote ease and rapidity in writing.

INSTRUCTIONAL COUNTING

In drilling upon the movement exercises, something more should be accomplished than the mere making of the exercises. If proper instruction is given, correct penholding and position can be acquired. This instruction should take the place of simply counting *one, two*, etc. Below is indicated the kind of instruction that may be given:



1	2	3
Touch	the paper	lightly.
Feet	on the	floor.
Slide	on the	fingers.
Push	the paper	forward.
Don't	pinch the	pen.

The teacher should move about the room, noting the faults and giving the directions in such a rhythmical way as to cause pupils to

maintain a free, easy motion. Merely counting *one, two, three,* etc., will not perfect position and penholding. The necessary instruction may be given by maintaining the rhythm as the directions are given. Faults in position and penholding that are noticed may be corrected as indicated above.

When these simple exercises are used as a means of bringing about good position and penholding, as well as good movement, it will be apparent that they cannot be passed over hurriedly. They should be used at the opening of the lessons until the proper manner of handling the pen becomes habitual.

These lateral movement exercises, together with the proper instruction in position and pencil holding, constitute the main work in arm movement for the first three grades.

The amount and rapidity of arm movement should increase from grade to grade. It is not expected that young children will write with the same rapidity or attempt as difficult exercises as the older pupils. The proper foundation should be laid in the lower grades in correct position, penholding and the lateral movement.

MORE ADVANCED ARM MOVEMENT

At the age of about ten or eleven years, pupils should increase the amount of arm movement used, by making more use of it in making the letters. Exercises "b", "c" and "d" in Writing Lessons No. 3 will promote this movement; also exercises in Writing Lessons No. 4.

Assume the position for writing, but do not use a pen. Push and pull the arm, making the movements necessary to make exercise "b", page 1, Writing Lessons No. 3. The last two fingers should act as a sliding support for the hand. The wrist and hand should not touch the paper. Keep the large part of the arm that comes in contact with the edge of the desk from sliding forward and back. This means that the skin stretches on the arm, allowing it to roll forward and back or round and round for exercise "c". If the sleeve is not tight, the wrist will move in and out of it. The muscles of the upper arm and shoulder are used to move the hand. Count for the down strokes in this exercise at the rate of about 180 down strokes to the minute.

Use penholders reversed in the same manner, keeping time to the motion and giving needed directions, such as: "Keep the wrist up"; "Arms on the desk"; "Curve the fingers under", etc., etc. Next reverse the penholders and write. In learning, it is a good plan to

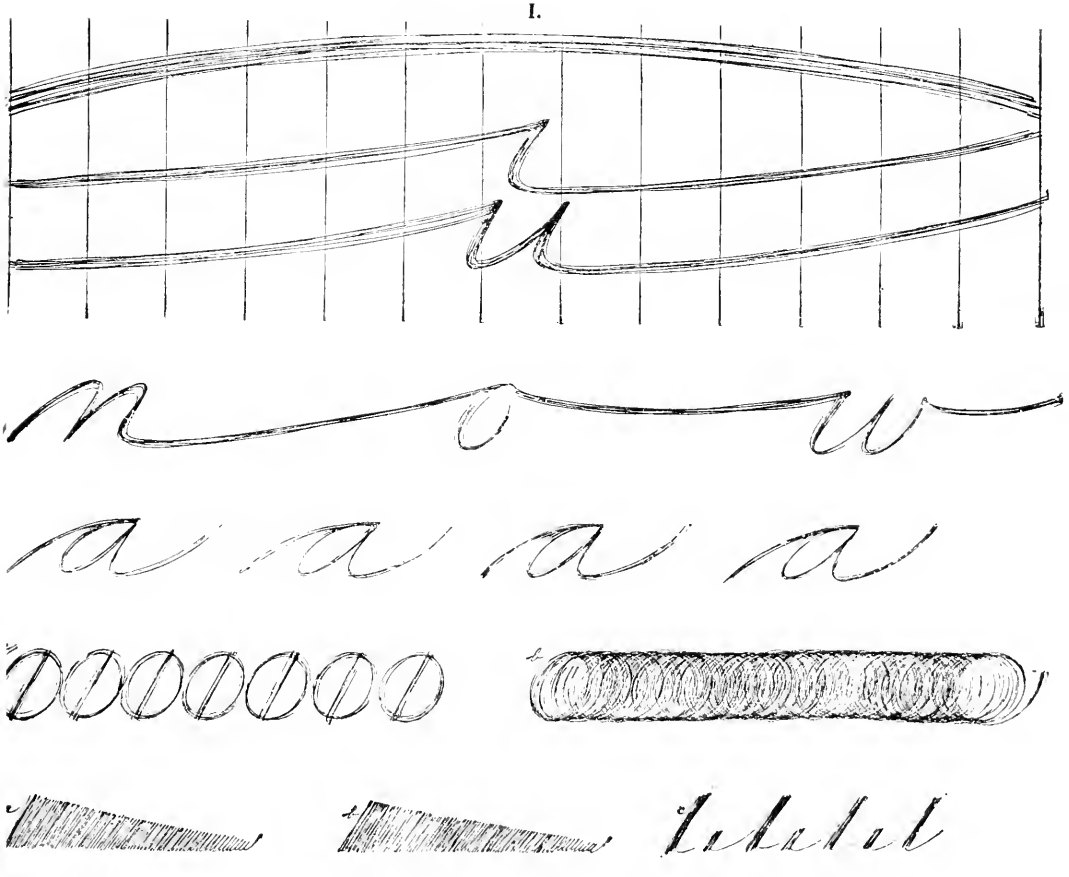
make these preliminary motions before marking on the paper. Have the pen touch the paper while it is in motion. Count *one, two, three,* etc., or *round, round, round, ready, write.* Then continue the counting and other directions necessary, such as: "Touch the paper lightly"; "Don't bend the fingers", etc.

This preliminary drill of getting the machinery to working properly before writing, is highly important. A great deal of earnestness and enthusiasm should be put into it. It should not be a careless exercise with pupils looking around the room. By giving the proper directions and keeping time to the movement, this can be prevented. A great many mistakes that otherwise would appear on the paper can be prevented by this preliminary work, if pupils give the proper attention to it.

THREE KINDS OF WORK

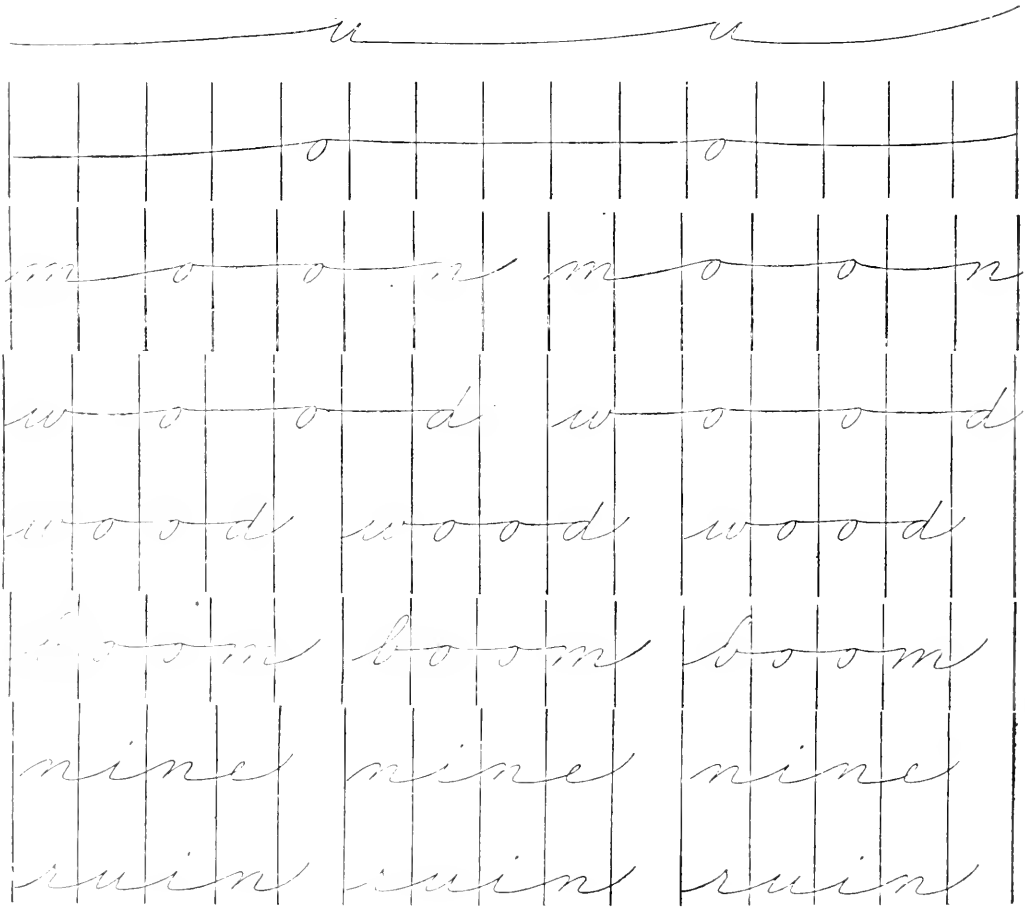
There are three kinds of work to be practiced in the writing lessons.

I.



I. Exercises with which it is easy to give instruction that will promote penholding and position as well as arm movement. These exercises are large and traced over. They can be readily recognized in the different Writing Lessons. The purpose as given above should be kept in mind when drilling upon these exercises. A great deal of vigor and life should be put into the work. The object mentioned should be brought to pass. Simply making the exercises will not accomplish this. It is the instruction that accompanies the practice that is of the greatest value. Giving directions in a rhythmical manner as pupils are writing, such as: "Don't pinch the pen"; "Quick, quick, quick", etc., is absolutely necessary. These exercises are better adapted to giving this kind of instruction than those that follow, or than words and sentences.

II.



II. The main object of this group of exercises is to control the movement acquired and apply it to actual writing. The letter-forms are small, are not traced over, and at first are placed far apart. Form can be emphasized without losing the movement, as there are but few letters in the first exercises and these are far apart. Controlling the complicated movement in the close spacing of ordinary writing is exceedingly difficult. The plan outlined in the Writing Lessons shows that this complicated close spacing is brought about gradually by inserting more and more letters in a given space.

Notice that these exercises are made of letters that are joined at the top. If letters that are joined at the base line are used and placed far apart, the letters become distorted and incorrect habits are formed. As the object of these exercises is to control the movement already started, the counting and instruction should be given so as to bring this about. Right here is where a great many teachers fail. They give this second group of exercises the same as the first. The hands go galloping along through the word like a runaway horse.

The opposite extreme from this is where another group of teachers fail. They secure good movement in the large exercises but it practically all disappears when anything approaching actual writing of words is attempted. The letters are frequently drawn out as slowly and awkwardly as if arm movement had never been heard of.

Now, if it is wrong to rush through a word with excellent movement and poor form, or to go through it slowly making good forms but no arm movement, what is to be done? One thing is the gradual introduction of the letter forms far apart, as described in the preceding paragraphs. This is an important point in carrying forward both form and movement.

CHECKING THE MOVEMENT

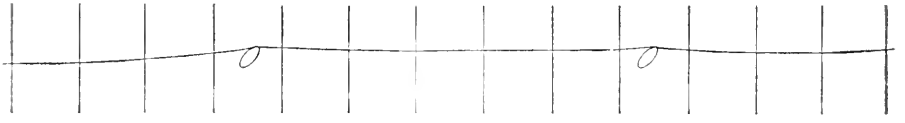
Another point is in the application of the movement used in such exercises as the so-called "oval exercise" to actual writing. The movement in this exercise is circular in form, devoid of angles, and without any turns in different directions, as is true in making letters. The movement in this exercise bears about the same relation to movement in writing words as running in a large circle bears to running in a zig-zag direction. If the runner does not check the motion at the angles, disastrous results will follow. The same

is true in writing. Use a quick movement, but check the motion at the angles, or where the lines come together. The cross in the following word indicates such points.

The motion should not be stopped, but may be checked at any such angles as indicated. Do not check the motion just for the sake of checking it, but to prevent uncontrolled, scrawly writing. The aim, of course, should be to diminish this checking of the motion. This can be done by practice as pupils become more proficient in controlling the pen. This idea can be given to pupils by showing them at the blackboard what has been described. It never should be carried so far as to bring about a jerky movement.

ACCELERATING THE MOVEMENT

The reverse of the foregoing is a good point to emphasize. Accelerate the motion where the track is clear and open as in the longer strokes from one letter to another. This idea of quickening the motion in easy, and checking it in difficult places can be started and indicated to pupils in the following exercise by giving directions as indicated below:



quick	careful	quick	careful	quick
hurry	steady	hurry	steady	hurry

The word "quick" is used on the long slide and the word "careful" on the letter "o". Check the motion at the top of "o" and hurry on the long slides. In running around a schoolroom, one would run faster on the long straight stretches and slow up at the difficult corners. This can be applied to writing.

TEST FOR ARM MOVEMENT

Care should be taken that the fingers that touch the paper do not remain in a fixed position while a few letters are being made. A good test for arm movement is to place a pencil in a vertical position against the left side of the wrist just back of the wrist joint. In writing the word "nine", for example, the wrist should move away from the pencil at the first stroke of the pen, and keep moving

to the right continuously. If the wrist remains against the pencil while a few letters are written, nothing but hand and finger motion are being used. This does not promote rapid, continuous writing.

REDUCING THE SIZE OF THE EXERCISES

Applying the movement work to actual writing is brought about by practicing letters far apart, then gradually reducing the space and also by reducing the size of the exercises practiced. The push and pull exercise, the oval exercise, and some of the others should be made smaller as soon as possible. These exercises are smaller in Writing Lesons No. 4, but they should be made smaller, if possible, before using this book. Begin the push and pull exercise large, and gradually reduce the size to as small as possible, as shown on page 5 of Writing Lessons No. 4. Alternating the large and small as also shown on this page is another good exercise.

It should be kept in mind that the small arm movements are more difficult to make than the large ones. When first applying the movement to small letters, it is a good plan to use movements larger than the letter-forms by making a large initial and final movement before and after the pen touches the paper. For this purpose single letters rather than words should be practiced, as these give more opportunities for large movements. In writing a word, a large movement can be used only at the beginning and end of the word. This is a very important point and should be made use of by all teachers. A good demonstration of what to do can be given at the blackboard. Anyone who uses good arm movement makes these initial and final movements larger than the lines shown on the paper. One who uses finger movement never makes these movements larger than the stroke on the paper. Frequently the movement can hardly reach to the end of the stroke being made. If thoroughly drilled upon, this point will do more than anything else to bring about a good application of arm movement to all writing.

III. The third kind of work to give in the writing lessons is actual writing. This should consist of words, sentences and paragraphs.

TIME ALLOTMENT FOR THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORK

If pupils had no written work to prepare, it would undoubtedly be best to take up the different kinds of work spoken of in the order given, and drill upon them one at a time for a considerable period. As pupils in practically all of the grades have a great

amount of written work that involves the use of words in sentences, this is not the best plan. The exercises under heading I and some of those under heading II are not closely related to actual writing. The practice of these exercises is necessary and highly important but they affect the written work only indirectly and remotely. On account of this written work, something must be put into the lessons that will have a direct bearing upon the actual writing and make an immediate and not a remote improvement.

The following diagram gives the allotment of time in a writing lesson to be devoted to the different kinds of work. The first diagram shows the time allotment when beginning arm movement writing. The second should be used after some progress has been made, and the third after more proficiency has been attained or during the latter part of the year.

I. Exercises and instruction that promote good position, penholding and movement.

II. Exercises designed to control the movement and bring it to actual writing.

III. Actual writing.

1. ———	1. ——	1. —
2. ——	2. ——	2. ——
3. —	3. ——	3. ———

The exercises are a means, the actual writing the end. The exercises should be given so as to serve their purpose, Follow this work with more and more practice of actual writing. In the Writing Lessons, it will be noticed that the actual writing consists, at first, of words, then sentences and paragraphs.

IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT IN ALL WRITTEN EXERCISES

The greater part of the foregoing relates chiefly to the manner of handling the pen, and might be called the technical instruction. As before stated, much of this training has only a remote or indirect effect upon the written work. The purpose now is to outline instruction that will bring about an immediate improvement in all written work that must be prepared from day to day.

Emphasize and teach something that will affect all of the letters, and contribute toward making a good page effect. Some important points along this line are, arrangement of writing on the page, size of writing, neatness, spacing between letters, good beginnings and endings of letters, the proper width as compared to height of letters,

and any other general points that will promote a good page effect.

To make a rapid improvement in poor penmanship, correct the general fault, which, if eliminated, will cause the greatest improvement. Invariably this fault will be found among the number mentioned in the preceding paragraph. More than one fault can be attacked, but the most glaring faults should be eradicated first. If good instruction is given, this method of attacking poor writing will bring extraordinary results.

ARRANGEMENT OF WRITING ON A PAGE

Have all work arranged so as to make a well-balanced effect. This means good spacing and equal margins on left and right sides of paper. This applies to arithmetic work, spelling, writing lessons, and all other forms of written work. Notice in the Writing Lessons that all of the copies are arranged with equal margins at the right and left. Do not try to teach this by having pupils draw vertical lines. Train them to use judgment in placing their work so as not to waste paper and at the same time to have margins and spacing that will make a pleasing and well-balanced paper. On paper 7″×8″ or 8″×10″, margins of three-fourths of an inch make a good page effect. Double this margin for paragraphs.

SIZE

A page of writing will not present a good effect if the writing is radically wrong in size. In writing upon the blackboard, the size for pupils to write can be indicated by drawing horizontal lines, making the letters fill proportionately the same amount of space as they would occupy on the papers of the pupils.

This is an important device, particularly in the primary grades, where spelling words are copied from the blackboard. If necessary, give special emphasis to this point in using the copies. Have the "Writing Lessons" placed on the papers close to pupils' writing. Have pupils stop to make comparisons frequently. The poorest writers can write larger or smaller, and can arrange their work well. Very frequently these two points effect a considerable improvement. In the primary grades draw lines on the board about six inches apart; in grammar grades about five inches apart.

NEATNESS

Good instruction in penholding, position and movement, and the proper attention to the materials used are the two most important

points in securing neatness. Gripping the pen is the main cause of heavy lines and laborious writing. In the directions for movement work instruction has been suggested that will aid in securing neat, fine lines. Use instructional counting, such as, "Touch the paper lightly"; "Don't pinch the pen", etc.

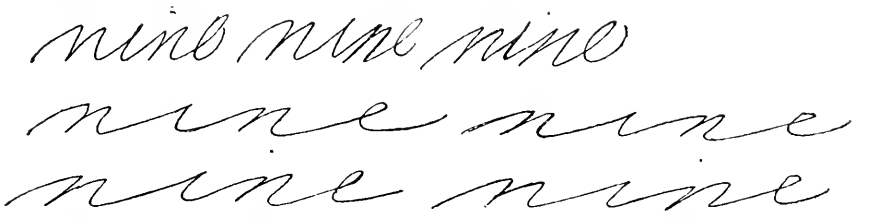
Good pens are an important factor in securing good writing. If pens are not furnished, teachers should either purchase for pupils or direct them in buying. A miscellaneous assortment of pens should not be allowed. Ink should be black and should flow freely. Penwipers should be provided. Inkwells should be cleaned occasionally. Wood or cork tipped holders should be used. Untidy written work and inattention to the materials used are generally found together. Frequently a lack of neatness is an indication of a low standard or poor discipline. The average class will hand in about as poor work as a teacher will accept. They will, on the other hand, rise to a high standard for an enthusiastic leader.

SPACE BETWEEN LETTERS

One of the important features in the "Writing Lessons" is the wide spacing between the letters. Nothing contributes more towards legibility. There are few general points that give the good results that wide spacing will. Poor writing is usually crowded. The letters should be narrow and each one should stand out clear and distinct from the others.

The space between letters is governed almost entirely by the strokes that go from one letter to another. Notice that the last down stroke in a letter is followed by an up stroke that swings off to the right considerably, and shows more slant than the preceding stroke. If more space between letters is desired, make these connecting strokes slant more. If the spacing is too wide, the remedy is obvious. Illustrate this point on the blackboard, showing the difference between the slant of the main down strokes and connecting strokes referred to. There should be only a moderate amount of slant to the main down strokes, but more to the connecting strokes. If good illustrations are given, an immediate improvement should be made. The hand can be made to move in any direction desired. Have pupils stop frequently and get in mind the new direction the pen should take. If an immediate improvement is not made, the work is not being carried on as it should be. Any amount of space can be made between the letters if the right instruction is given and if pupils give the proper thought and care

to their work. Thoughtless practice is worse than no practice at all.



The above shows improvement made in one lesson where good instruction in spacing was given

BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS OF LETTERS

A good page effect is frequently nullified by initial and final strokes that do not harmonize with the other lines. This is usually an indication of poor movement. The pen should be in motion a little before and after it touches the paper to make a letter. In finishing all of the small letters and most of the capitals the pen should glide from the paper. If a poor movement is used the initial and final strokes are likely to be short, crooked and to end abruptly. The initial strokes of most of the small letters begin on the base line. The final strokes to the letters should be carried up in the space to about the height of the small letter "i". More care in making these strokes is likely to induce more care in making all of the lines.

PROPORTION OF LETTERS

If the letters are too broad or too narrow, the writing will not present a pleasing effect. If the letters are too broad, the turns at the top and base are too wide. Show on the blackboard that broad or narrow turns at the top and base of letters can be made. For any given fault in writing there is a particular point to emphasize, a certain place on which to focus the attention. In modifying broad or too narrow letters, the particular place to attack is at the turns at the top and base of the letters.

If the joinings at the base line are too angular, they are caused by bringing the final down strokes of the letters directly to the base line before proceeding to the next letter. The joining or turn should be begun a little above the base line. This is a sure cure for angular joinings. If the turns are too broad the down strokes should be brought closer to the base line before turning. Angular joinings

are sometimes caused by bringing the pen to a stop. The pen may be brought to a stop or the motion checked at certain places, but not at the ones referred to above.

GENERAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION

There should be a proper combination of the general instruction, which aims to make an immediate improvement in all written work; and the technical instruction, which has for its object the proper handling of the pen. Some make mistakes of giving only the technical instruction. Considerable proficiency will be shown in making the movement exercises, but the written work invariably will be poor. Others make the mistake of giving all the attention to the appearance of the writing, disregarding the manner of writing. This will produce good appearing writing in the primary grades, and poor work in the grammar grades, where rapidity is a necessity. The good appearing writing is drawn out slowly.

A proper balance should be maintained between the manner of writing and the appearance of the writing by combining the two kinds of instruction mentioned. So long as considerable written work is required both these kinds of instruction should be carried on together. Those who say they are working for movement only, shut their eyes to an important consideration in public school work. A glance at the amount of written work prepared every day should convince one that habits in regard to form are being developed. It is best to recognize this and to give instruction that will have an effect on this written work. A teacher in the public schools deceives herself when she says she is getting nothing but movement.

BUSINESS COLLEGE PLANS IN THE GRADES

The foregoing plan that has been condemned will work well in a business college where pupils do not have a large amount of written work in connection with their other studies. In the grades, teaching writing is like building a new bridge where traffic must not be interrupted. In a business college it is like building a new bridge where traffic is stopped. Business college plans need modifying and adapting to the conditions in the grades. Pupils in the grades are younger, and vary in age, and physical and mental ability with the different grades. The time devoted to penmanship instruction in the grades must be small as compared with the time given to this subject in business colleges where fewer studies are pursued. The large amount of written work in the grades, and the

other conditions spoken of, make it difficult to use business college methods. They can be made to succeed but only by ignoring or changing the conditions referred to. If an unwarranted amount of time is given to the subject most any plan will succeed. It is better to have a plan fit children of various stages of physical and mental development than to try to make children fit a given plan. Good pedagogical treatment is as important in treating penmanship as any other subject. What can be done with young children is not always a good criterion of what is best to do.

THE WRITING LESSON

Fifteen to twenty minutes per day is a reasonable amount of time to give to this subject. Any period during the day except just before or after intermission is suitable for this lesson.

Have the writing materials given out before school or at recess, or have them ready to be given out at the time of the lesson in an expeditious manner. Prepare for this lesson the same as for any other. Plan the lessons with the special needs of the class in mind. Learn to do what is expected of pupils. It is better to prepare so as to be able to show pupils how to do what is expected of them rather than to simply tell them what to do. Too many teachers depend solely upon telling pupils what to do. This never brings the best results. If necessary teachers should learn along with pupils. Teachers who fail to make this preparation do not make inspiring leaders. The writing lessons are very likely to bore both pupils and teachers.

Much time is wasted by not diagnosing, or improper diagnosing of pupils' needs. Observe them while writing and inspect their written work. It is a poor plan to take any set of lessons and proceed from page to page. It is better to study the needs of the pupils and select the most suitable work. Until good position and movement are acquired, begin the lessons according to the directions given in the preceding pages. The proportion of the writing period to be given to this movement and position work will depend upon the proficiency of pupils in these particulars. The time should diminish as pupils acquire ability along these lines. Next drill upon some exercise that will help control the movement, and finally follow this with practice in actual writing. This latter work should should frequently be closely related to the written work required in the other studies. One of the main objects of the writing lessons

is to prepare pupils to write what they are required to write from day to day. It is a mistake to continue lessons from week to week giving practice upon exercises, letters and simple words. Such a plan would fail to make an improvement in the written work. It is a good plan to close the lesson occasionally with practice upon the kind of written work that is poorly prepared. For example, if the spelling or arithmetic work is poorly written, drill upon this work, using the same paper pupils will use in this work. It is best to have the paper used for penmanship practice correspond, so far as possible, in ruling and size, to that used in other work.

Care should be taken not to go from one exercise to another, practicing several of each kind in one lesson. Select one that the majority of the pupils need. Practice it sufficiently to make some progress. As the lessons proceed, go over the different kinds of work outlined, but advance as rapidly as possible to more difficult work and to more practice upon actual writing. It is not an uncommon mistake for teachers to spend too much time on exercises and not enough on actual writing. The exercises are but a means to an end. If, after a period of three or four months, the time devoted to the exercises is not diminished, either a mistake is being made in planning the lessons, or the instruction in penholding, position and movement has been ineffectual.

Use the blackboard freely. Copies at pupils' desks do not do away with the necessity of using the blackboard. Write the copy on the blackboard, standing one side so pupils can observe the process. Give a sort of chalk talk as it is being written, giving special emphasis to the difficult letters, combinations and any general points that need attention. The teacher who has prepared for the lesson will know what to emphasize. Ease and rapidity can also be illustrated to good advantage. It is not sufficient to make good forms. Show how the pen starts in motion before touching the paper and how it glides from the paper in finishing a word. Any teacher who fails to use the blackboard in the foregoing manner is omitting one of the most important means of teaching this subject. This is particularly true in the primary grades where pupils are not familiar with the proper route the pen should take in forming the letters.

It is generally best to control the amount of practice upon each exercise. This may be done by giving a certain number of words or lines to be written and by counting. It is not natural for all to

write at the same speed. Where considerable proficiency has been attained, pupils need not be kept exactly together. Some teachers provide an extra piece of practice paper and when any pupil completes the required amount on a given exercise, the other paper is used until directions are given to proceed to the next exercise. By this means, at the close of the lesson, all of the papers will present a finished and uniform appearance.

By the foregoing it is not meant that pupils are to write the work assigned them without stopping, the teacher in the meantime doing nothing. The teacher should move about the room, noting the most glaring faults in the manner of writing and in the appearance. The class should be stopped and at the blackboard special emphasis should be given. In the primary grades and in any grade where the writing is poor the amount of instruction should be greater than where a greater amount of proficiency has been attained. Pupils should not be allowed to practice radically wrong writing with the idea that practice will make perfect. Thoughtful, well-directed practice is effectual; but mere practice or repetition is frequently worse than no practice at all, as it tends to strengthen incorrect habits.

After taking note of the work being done, lead pupils to see their faults by questioning them. Put the questions in the following form, directing the pupils' attention toward the faults noted: "Is your writing too large or too small?" "Are the letters too broad or too narrow?" Etc. Of course the questions are to be based on the general faults noticed. Putting the questions in the double form make all compare their work with the copy. It does not suggest a change to those who do not need to make one, but keeps all alert for mistakes. Some teachers make the mistake of going about the room telling pupils what to do. Other teachers make the mistake of asking pupils to find something wrong with their work without guiding them as directed above. This is not good teaching, as pupils are likely to find unimportant faults that would be of little advantage if corrected. The method of directing the class into the right channels by well-directed questions has been found to be an efficient and economical means of instructing large classes.

Leading pupils to see what should be done is only the first step in any educational process. The next step is to show definitely how to do the work and how to overcome the faults. This is done mainly by illustrations at the blackboard and has been treated in a previous topic.

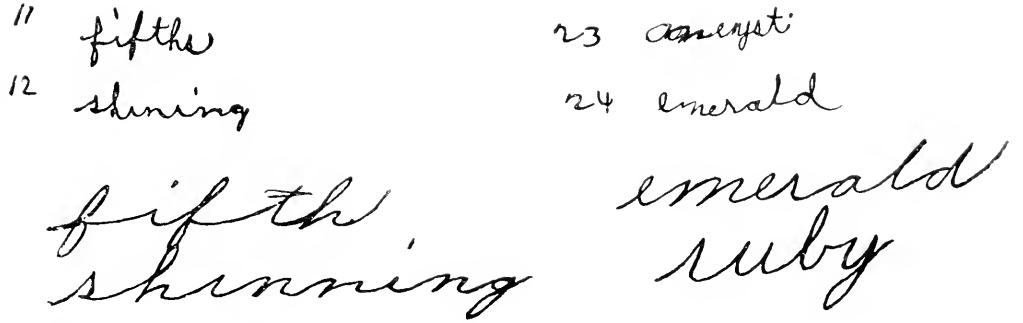
The third step is to secure the proper response from pupils. Here is where many teachers fail. Without doubt the greatest error in penmanship practice is the repetition down to the bottom of the page of faults that appear at the top. This can be prevented by the methods just outlined if the proper response is secured from pupils. Where the writing is poor, a good lesson will show marked changes at the bottom of the page. One paper may show a change in size, another in spacing, and so on. One good way to secure a proper return for the instruction is to carefully note and commend improvement. For example: if a teacher finds some one who has made an improvement in spacing, it is a good plan to stop the class and exhibit the paper. Call attention to the fact that the pupil had not been told to make this particular change and point out that the pupil must, therefore, have paid attention, discovered the mistake, and finally by his or her own individual effort corrected the mistake. Appeal to the others to remove every trace of the faults under discussion from their papers before the close of the lesson. If this line of work is carried on with earnestness, radical changes can be made in a comparatively short time. Pupils can be made to feel that it is a disgrace and a waste of effort to allow faults that are radically wrong to go unheeded.

Summing up the foregoing: first, the teacher should emphasize important points, and lead pupils to see general faults that will bring about rapid progress; second, she should show in a very definite way how to accomplish the work; third, she should use such methods as will secure from her class a good response. If pupils are induced to listen, to compare, to judge and to act accordingly, they are going through a mental process which will give excellent results in any educational subject whatsoever. Attentiveness and responsiveness are two important conditions in a good school. There never can be any education in penmanship or anything else by simply pouring out instruction. There must be the proper reaction on the part of the learner. Teachers who fail to get this response from pupils sometimes convict themselves of being poor teachers by saying: "They ought to do it; they have heard it every day." No class is more difficult to deal with than one that has heard good instruction, but has not heeded it. It is believed that this accounts, to a large extent, for the fact that a number of pupils spend a term or a year in a room and learn practically nothing. They have been in hearing distance of the instruction but have not reacted on the instruction.

POSSIBLE AND IMPOSSIBLE REQUIREMENTS

It is impossible to change poor writers to good writers in a short period. It is possible, however, to have just as prompt and complete a response to many things pertaining to penmanship instruction, as it is in regard to gymnastics or discipline. If all teachers fully realized this, far better results would be obtained. Teachers realize that their directions to face front or to stand erect away from the desk should be complied with immediately by the entire class. They should realize in the same way that they are failing when their directions to place arms, feet or paper in the correct position are not heeded. Many teachers allow such directions as these and others in the same class to go unheeded by a number of pupils. If directions in regard to order are not complied with, teachers feel that the issue is important enough to elicit their best and, if necessary, unusual procedure. The same attitude should be taken toward all penmanship instruction that can be complied with immediately. Larger or smaller writing, wider or narrower spacing come under the head of immediate and radical change. There is no good reason why a change in size or slant cannot be made immediately. It is not meant that these changes can be made and the writing executed automatically. The hand is a servant and can be made to move in a different way if the mind is brought into use properly.

The preceding sentence indicates the difficulty in penmanship instruction. The main trouble is not with pupils who cannot write but with pupils who can write but have acquired incorrect habits. These cannot be changed unless the mind is used with considerable vigor. This requires interest, force and enthusiasm on the part of teachers. No easy-going, perfunctory instruction will be adequate.



The above shows a good response from a pupil in one lesson. Size, spacing and slant were the general points emphasized

INCENTIVES

The ability of the teacher to write well and to give good instruction are the best incentives to good work. Many teachers need to use no others. Handwriting is in such constant use, that many find it difficult to arouse sufficient enthusiasm to bring about good results. Many things can be done that will arouse interest and cause pupils to put forth unusual efforts. Incentives that single out a pupil are not the best kind. A prize for the best writer may be won by a pupil who is naturally a good writer, and who does not have to put forth a great effort to outstrip the others. This prize is not likely to arouse the poorest writers to greater efforts.

Incentives that appeal to a greater number are to be preferred. Something that will interest the poor writers, and cause the entire class to be stimulated to greater efforts, is needed in many schools. Competition between classes or schools is a good incentive, if entered into in the right spirit. Many teachers have found it helpful to have other teachers visit their rooms and judge the proficiency attained in some particular line that has been the subject of special effort. For example: Miss Smith says to her class that Miss Brown is coming in next week to see how many are perfect in position, penholding or movement. Committees of pupils may do this kind of work.

Another good plan is to have two captains appointed, who choose sides as for a spelling match. Coaches or helpers may be appointed to help the poor writers and, in general, to get the team ready for the contest. As much time as possible should be taken in preparation for these events, as it is the preparation and not the contests that is of the most value.

Considerable help and inspiration has been gained by having a committee of pupils or an entire class visit another school or room where particularly good work is being done.

The same writing lesson may be given to different rooms, the papers from both put together and marked. Each room can then determine its mark.

Exhibiting specimens on charts or bulletin boards is an incentive that should not be overlooked. The specimens should be put up for improvement as well as for the best writing. The work should be changed frequently. Exchanging specimens or letters with other schools has a stimulating effect.

MEASURING SCALES

It is impossible for a number of teachers to rank the writing of their pupils uniformly without using a uniform standard. Measuring Scales are supplying this standard. In judging handwriting both legibility and ease of execution should be considered. To judge solely by legibility is likely to put a premium on drawing the writing slowly. By using a standard for rapidity as well as legibility this is obviated. The Guide for Rating and Correcting Handwriting, pubished in connection with the Writing Lessons, presents a standard for both legibility and rapidity. Teachers should make tests occasionally, taking note of the time in which the specimens are written. Individual pupils or a committee of pupils may do this work. By having one of these scales in a room the regular written work may be tested frequently. The directions for correcting prominent faults will be found helpful.

RAPIDITY

The Guide for Rating Handwriting referred to gives a good minimum standard for rapidity for the grammar grades. Under the specimens exhibited will be found small figures giving the rate at which the specimens were written.

It should be kept in mind that what is desired is legibility and rapidity. In all forms of manual work the ability to do things well and quickly is brought about gradually by means of repetition. With the proper handling of the tools used and with practice, rapidity can be acquired and accuracy maintained. This is true of typewriting, typesetting, stenography and other kinds of manual work. A good handwriting should be acquired in the same manner.

Two common mistakes should be avoided. One is where the proper handling of the tools is not given sufficient attention. Position, penholding and movement are referred to. This is likely to occur in the primary grades where a good foundation in the proper handling of the pen should be made. Good appearing writing can be made but it will deteriorate rapidly in the grammar grades where rapidity is a necessity. As stated in previous topics, both the manner of writing and the appearance should receive attention in all of the grades. It is better to secure only fair results in both legibility and the manner of execution than to secure excellent results in legibility and poor results in the manner of writing.

The other mistake is where rapidity is made prominent and legibility neglected. This is usually found where business college plans are in use and where children of various ages, ranging from six to sixteen are made to fit the plan rather than having the plan fit the children. The advocates of this plan say "get rapidity and the form will come". Under this plan in the public schools the form is more likely to go than it is to come. Unless a school is turned into a special school of penmanship, where an unusual amount of time is devoted to this subject, a horde of scribblers will result. It is irrational and unpedagogical to expect young children to write as rapidly as older ones. Rapidity should be a matter of growth through the grades. The main thing to be kept in mind is that such penholding and position should be maintained as will be conducive to ease and rapidity.

Occasionally have some selection written for one, two or three minutes. Have the number of letters counted and note the results. Urge the slow, careful writers to write faster, and those who have written rapidly but illegibly to write more slowly. It will sometimes be found that some are writing so rapidly that good form is impossible. A good general rule to follow is to write as rapidly as possible and maintain good legibility.

It should be kept in mind that good movement is the most important point in training for ease and rapidity. It will be futile to try for speed without first securing correct position, penholding and movement.

LEFT HANDED HANDWRITING

The majority of psychologists and physiologists believe that left-handedness in children should not be changed. Where pupils are thoroughly left handed, it is believed that there is an injury to the speech centers and to the nervous system by insisting upon the change. It is claimed that some children have been caused to stammer by an endeavor to make them right handed. In right handed persons the motor centers are in the left lobe of the brain and the speech centers in the right. In changing from one hand to the other it is claimed that these centers are disturbed.

After careful study and investigation it is believed that many children who are inclined to write with the left hand are not thoroughly left handed by nature. It has been found that about half of the left handed writers can change without great difficulty or without any noticeable injury. When left handed pupils are not

skillful with this hand a trial should be made with the other. School rooms are lighted and some kinds of work are prepared for right handed persons. An effort should be made to change those who use the left hand awkwardly or who are not thoroughly left handed.

The paper should be placed in the same relation to the left arm as it is to the right for right handed writing. This is where the main mistake has been made. Left handed pupils have been left to drift along without any instruction or have been required to follow directions for right handed pupils so far as possible. When the paper is turned for right handed writing and the left hand used it brings the hand directly into the writing. To obviate this the wrist is bent so that the hand is above the writing in a very awkward posiion. This is a characteristic position where correct instruction has not been given. When the paper is placed in the position advocated, left handed pupils can assume as good position and use as good movement as the right handed children. It has been proved that those trained in this manner are not inferior in ability to write. The same slant should be maintained, the pen being pulled up and to the right instead of being pushed as is done with the right hand.

The main thing is to stop ignoring this problem. A rule making it obligatory for all to change should be abandoned. Parents should be consulted and their coöperation secured. Pupils should be made to see an advantage in changing so that they will take some initiative in regard to it, or little or no progress will be made.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS

Divide the room into two main groups. The first group to be composed of pupils in grade one who can write, pupils in the second grade, and any who are deficient in writing in the third grade. All the others except the beginners to constitute the second group.

Not many beginners enter a country school each year. These can be started at the blackboard and by giving special copies at the desks. The older pupils can give considerable assistance in this work.

Instruction may be given to both groups simultaneously in position, penholding, movement, size, margins, slant, spacing, etc. Much of the instruction for each lesson should be given to both groups. The only difference is that the exercises and copies for group one should be more simple than for group two. Paper with three-quarters inch ruling is best for group one, and paper with lines

three-eighths of an inch apart for group two. Manilla paper is suitable for the first group, as pencils will be used. During the year copies from Writing Lessons Nos. 1 and 2 should be used by group one, and for the second group Writing Lessons No. 3 should be the standard, with occasional copies from Writing Lessons No. 4. Pupils should be advanced from one group to another as rapidly as possible regardless of their grade or the time of year.

Some of the best writing ever seen was from country schools where teachers understand how to give instruction. The best writers should give considerable help to the poor writers. The younger children always learn much from the older pupils, but sometimes the younger pupils stimulate older pupils who write poorly. At any rate, there should be the best of coöperation in this kind of a school as well as any other kind. One good writer in a room is sufficient to stimulate the others if there is the right spirit in the class. There is no good reason why writing in country schools should not be equal to the work of schools of a single grade. It seems to be easier to secure intense efforts from country school pupils than from pupils living in the city.

WHEN AND HOW TO INTRODUCE INK

It is believed to be best to introduce pens and ink in the third year or grade. If sufficiently coarse pens were used by beginners the lines would be so coarse as to make the writing untidy. The average pen is too delicate an instrument for young children to use.

During the second or third month of the third year begin using pens for the penmanship lesson. Written work should not be attempted until some proficiency is attained in the special lesson. The chief points to emphasize are, touching the paper lightly and moving the pen along without hesitating. From the first, light lines should be insisted upon. It is not necessary for pupils to pass through a period of heavy lines and blots.

Give simple copies and give instruction that will counteract the tendency to grip the pen. Many teachers make the mistake of giving too difficult copies before pupils are accustomed to handling the pen properly.

Moisten new pens before using them. Dip the pen in the ink to the eye of the pen. Clean the pen with a penwiper. Care should be taken to have both nibs of the pen squarely on the paper.

TEACHING BEGINNERS

When children first enter school at five or six years of age they should not be called upon to make the fine accurate writing that is frequently required. There has been no co-ordination of the small muscles used in making the fine writing. The nervous tension required is neither good for the health or the writing.

There is an increasing tendency to eliminate written work from the primary grades in many schools. Where this is done so that there is not an early demand for written work, the writing lessons can be simple and not at all exacting.

The first lessons should be on some simple word, such as "on", "one" or "can". The word method is far more interesting to pupils and they will learn to write more readily than when practicing separate letters. Teachers who have never tried this method may think is more difficult, but wherever it is given a trial there is no desire to return to another method.

If pupils are young, immature, and have not had kindergarten training, some training of the arms is helpful. This can be done through other kinds of hand work or through movement exercises. Rhythm is an important factor in teaching writing, and these exercises may be made, repeating some of the well known jingles and keeping time to the rhythm.

When ready for the first word write the copy on the blackboard in a large hand, standing one side so pupils can observe the movements of the crayon. Erase and rewrite it several times, describing the movements of the crayon as the copy is being written. Have pupils point to the crayon and follow its movements. Erase and see how many can remember how to write it by motioning with their hands. Have them write it on their desks with their fingers. The main thing is to give sufficient instruction so that pupils will not only know the word, but will remember the movements necessary to write it. The imitative faculties of young children are so keen that any movements made by the teacher can be reproduced if they are not too small and complicated and if they are repeated a sufficient number of times.

After a thorough preparation erase the copy and have pupils write upon the unruled blackboard. If the copy is left on the board pupils will write a little, look at the copy, erase and write in a hesitating manner. Give out one-half pieces of crayon, ask pupils to stand away from the board, write freely, in a large hand.

If there is a failure to remember the way the crayon should go, more instruction is necessary. Fine, exact writing should not be expected. The aim should be to secure the form in the rough. Details that will make the work more exact should not be given at first. After a time these details can be given but at first it will only burden and confuse.

If blackboard space is not available, large, unruled paper and wax crayons may be used. After pupils are well started on the blackboard, the paper and crayon work should be introduced. Rough, manilla paper 9″×12″ is suitable for this work. Here the movements must be controlled and confined to a certain area. This is the direction the training should take.

After about six months of this kind of work, pencils and paper with one-inch ruling should be introduced. Make the small letters fill nearly half of the space and the loop and capitals fill nearly all of the space. Teach position of body, arms, paper and pencil holding as thoroughly as possible. In using wax crayons use a small piece. This makes it unnecessary to teach pencil holding. The arm should be held free from the desk. It is like blackboard writing reduced to a smaller scale.

In schools where written work is desired as soon as possible, the first year work should be carried on in a different manner. Pupils will have to be put to work on paper early in the term. The regular lessons on paper may be supplemented by practice at the board. This will aid considerably to get them started quickly. If the course of study requires written spelling and other written work, it would be best to use paper with three-quarters-inch ruling instead of the kind mentioned above. The same proportion of the space should be filled as indicated above.

Give careful attention to position, pencil holding and the lateral movement that develops the ability to carry the hand easily across the page. Emphasize details as well as the general direction of the crayon. This is described under the topic, "The Writing Lesson". Pupils should be taught to move the pencil along with a steady, continuous movement and to touch the paper lightly. Marking over the letters or erasing spoils the effect of written work and should not be allowed in any grade. If the habit is once formed it is difficult to overcome.

SUPERVISING OF ALL WRITTEN WORK

If what is taught in the writing lessons is not put into practice in all other writing no real progress is being made. If the penmanship lessons were to be abandoned and the written work properly supervised, the results would be better than if good lessons were given and the other writing not properly looked after.

The first work a teacher should do on taking charge of a room is to show pupils how to write the work that must be prepared from day to day. This can be done in the penmanship lessons and by models upon paper and the blackboard. If the teacher's work on the blackboard is crowded and poorly written, good work cannot be expected from pupils. There will be some difference between the quality of the daily written work and the penmanship lessons, but there should never be a radical difference. This should be insisted upon far more than is usually done. An estimate of the ability to write should be made from the daily written exercises. Pupils should be judged by what they habitually do and not by what they can do occasionally. Slovenly, careless work should never be accepted. When something has been accomplished in the penmanship lessons, there should be a perceptible change in all other writing. If these points are not insisted upon and if all written work is not properly supervised, poor penmanship will result.

How to supervise this work effectually is frequently a teacher's most troublesome problem. Preserve as much of the written work as possible, make comparison so as to note improvement or non-improvement. It will have a very good effect if it is known that the ordinary writing is to be preserved and reviewed occasionally. Some teachers have a committee of pupils look after this work, selecting the best papers, or those in which the points emphasized in the writing lesson have been incorporated. It frequently stimulates a poor writer to be a member of such a committee.

Much depends upon the attitude of the teacher and the attitude developed on the part of pupils. A sentiment in favor of neat, careful writing can be developed. One teacher placed all written work on a table near the door where visitors were seated and made pupils feel that nothing but their best work should be shown. They responded to this to such an extent that on one occasion when a substitute teacher was in charge the monitors refused to collect a paper from a new pupil who had written carelessly. The new teacher, not knowing the plan in vogue, placed the paper with the

others. In the afternoon, when the regular teacher returned, she was greeted by a storm of protests against having the room disgraced by the poor writing. The new pupil was shown the writing of the other pupils and told of the plan to hand in nothing but the best work. In less than a week his paper could not be distinguished from the others. He could not stand the moral pressure in favor of good writing. Most teachers develop this attitude in regard to cleanliness and attendance. The right attitude can be developed in regard to writing. No exact, cut-and-dried method can be given, but any teacher who sees the importance of it and is thoroughly in earnest about it, can accomplish the desired results. This cannot be done by nagging pupils, or keeping them after school to recopy papers. A teacher who obtained particularly fine written work was asked what she would do if a pupil handed in a poor, carelessly written exercise. She replied that she would have it rewritten. Feeling that the wrong impression had been given, the writer asked how many papers had been recopied. She thought about three had been copied in the previous five months. There were teachers in the room who were having twice that number copied nearly every day. Both had the same rule but one did not have to enforce the penalty. By her high standard and inspirational methods the proper results were obtained. Another teacher was being visited by a superintendent who found superior written work. He thought special preparation had been made for his visit. He finally asked the pupils if this were not so. Upon being assured to the contrary, he further questioned the teacher. Finally the teacher said, "No pupil with any respect for me or for himself would think of handing me anything but his best work." This satisfied the visitor.

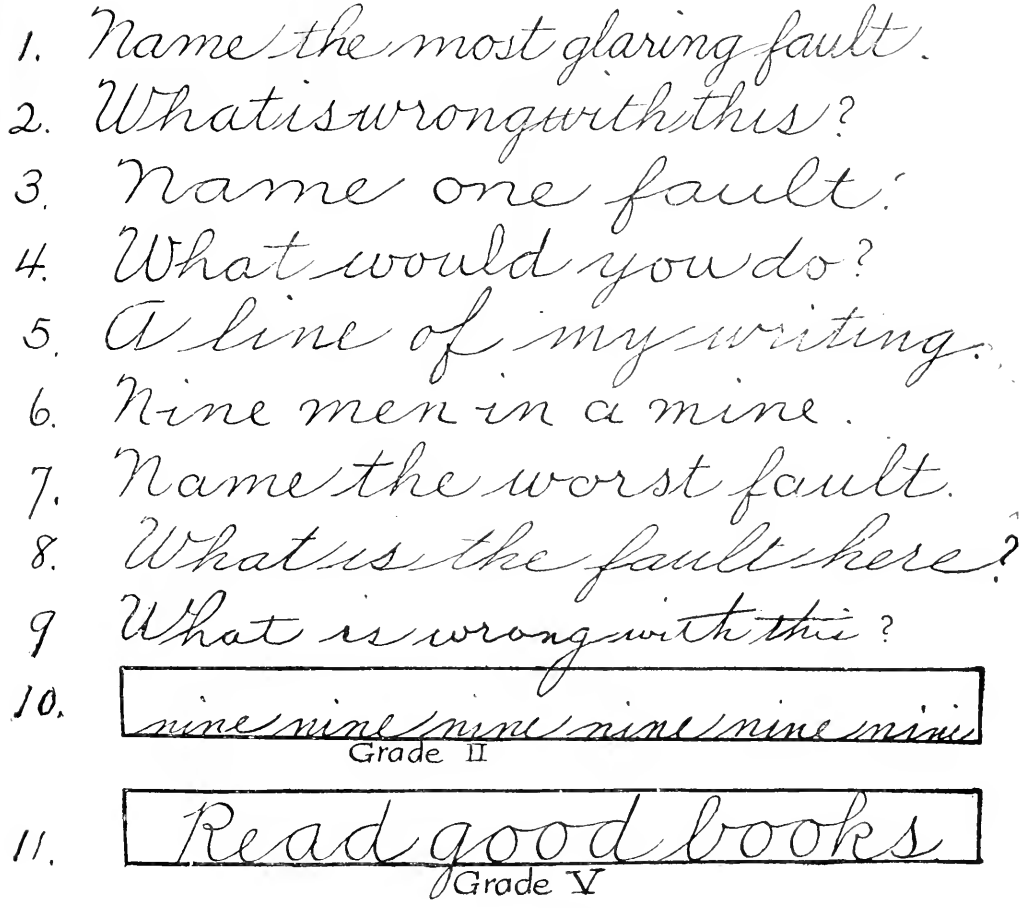
DIAGNOSING POOR WRITING

The proper diagnosing of poor writing will determine the kind of instruction to be given. This requires training and good judgment. The following specimens are given to furnish practice in this work. Endeavor to select the most glaring fault in each line. Select the one, which, if eradicated, would bring about the most improvement.

Continue this line of work by taking a set of papers from an entire class, look them over, selecting a few general faults that are most common and that, if corrected, will make considerable change for the better in the page effect. If the general points are good, then select the most common errors in the forms of the letters. As

before stated, most of the lessons should furnish both kinds of instruction.

The instruction should be so clear and definite that the pupils will know what has been the aim of the lesson. First a definite plan, and then such instruction as to leave no doubt as to what is desired. Too much should not be attempted so that the instruction


1. Name the most glaring fault.
2. What is wrong with this?
3. Name one fault.
4. What would you do?
5. A line of my writing.
6. Nine men in a mine.
7. Name the worst fault.
8. What is the fault here?
9 What is wrong with this?
10.
Grade II
11. Read good books
Grade V

is scattered over too many points. Several points may be brought out, making one or two the chief issues. It is not a good plan to confine the instruction to one point, ignoring all others. Each point gained must be held on to when passing on to others. For example, it would be a mistake, if some proficiency had been acquired in neatness, to drop this, losing what had been achieved to take up

another point. It is difficult to build up a good handwriting entirely with a piece-by-piece method, as so many different factors are brought into use every time any writing is executed.

TEACHING FORM

After listening to a discussion of methods such as given in the preceding pages, teachers sometimes ask when form is taught. Undoubtedly they have in mind the teaching of each separate letter. This is a poor plan to use in the grades where much written work must be prepared. It is too slow a process. An abnormal amount of time must be devoted to this subject to make such a plan successful. The reason for this is that while a few letters are being practiced, all of the letters are being used many times each day in the written exercises. Even if some letters could be perfected in a few lessons, this would make no noticeable effect in the written work. Before the last letters are reached, the first ones practiced would have deteriorated and become worn out.

A better plan of improving poor writing is to chiefly emphasize the general points which will effect an entire page of writing. This plan has been outlined in previous pages of this manual. This does not mean that the forms of the letters should not be taught and emphasized. Any letters that are poorly made or that are particularly difficult should be given special emphasis when writing the copy on the board. This should be done all through the grades. Another objection to making a business of practicing the separate letters is that, with the exception of some of the capitals, they are not used separately. One of the main difficulties in teaching writing is to have the letters joined properly. In practicing separate letters, no practice is given this point. No objection is made to giving a little practice on a few particularly troublesome letters; but for a general plan as commonly used, it is not a good one for the public schools.

DETAILED AND GENERAL INSTRUCTION

Where writing is very poor, the first instruction should be on such general points as size, slant, spacing, proportion of letters, beginnings and endings of letters or fine lines. As these points improve, more and more instruction should be introduced of a detailed character that will give the writing more exactness. Much of the poor form will disappear if the general points mentioned are perfected. It is possible, however, to perfect the general points

and have imperfect letter forms. Undoubtedly the best instruction combines both the detailed and the general instruction, with the latter predominating at first and the former after some proficiency has been attained. Each teacher must judge the proportion of each kind of instruction needed. If the work is poor along the general lines mentioned, the general instruction should predominate. If the general points are good but the letters lack exactness, the detailed instruction should be most in evidence.

Suppose a teacher were giving a lesson on the word "ride". If she talked as follows, while writing the copy, the instruction would be in regard to details:

"Notice how I swing up and to the right, curving the line slightly. Now see how the top of the *r* is made by retracing the line a little. The top should be made slanting this way and the corner made rounding before coming down with the slanting straight line. Make a good turn here at the base and swing up for the *i*. Another good turn and swing up and over to the right on top of the letter *d*, but not down so as to make a hook. Be careful to retrace this line a little, then around up to meet the other line and on up to the top. Retrace the line nearly to the base line, swinging off for the *e*, being careful to finish it well in this way." '

This gives an example of detailed instruction with special emphasis on the letters *r* and *d*. Such lessons should not be the rule if the size, margin, spacing, quality of lines are radically wrong.

GROUPING OF CAPITALS

As most of the capitals are not joined to other letters, it is a good plan to practice them in groups. One group is composed of letters having the same initial stroke. M, N, U, V, W, Y, X, Z, and Q form this group. T, F, I, P, B, and S are finished by bringing the pen to a sudden stop, making a slight point as shown in the copies As this is likely to be faulty, it is a good plan to practice this group. Letters, similar in formation, make up another group as follows: A, O, C, G, D, E. The remaining letters may be practiced whenever there is need of it.

FIGURES

Figures are used to such an extent and are so unintelligible when poorly made that they should receive a great deal of attention. It cannot be determined what a given figure is meant to be by what follows or precedes it, as is often true of a letter in a word.

Lessons on figures are given in all of the Writing Lessons. These lessons should be used sufficiently often to make and keep this kind of work in good condition.

A good order for taking up the figures will be found on page sixteen of Writing Lessons No. 4. An important point is the spacing, both vertical and horizontal. Much of the poor appearance of arithmetic work is caused by crowded and irregular spacing.

A common mistake is to allow young children to practice making the figures before being shown the correct way. Very awkward habits are frequently formed. The best way is to show many times at the blackboard the proper place to begin and the way to proceed in each figure. By having pupils practice upon the blackboard, mistakes can be easily detected.

In making 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 0, 6 ,and the large part of 5, the pen should be brought to a sudden stop. In finishing 2, 8, and 5, the pen should glide from the paper.

BLACKBOARD WRITING

In addition to the use of the blackboard by teachers and beginners described in previous topics, much help can be obtained in any grade by having pupils practice on the blackboard. Many teachers allow pupils to go to the board whenever they have completed the work assigned at their desks. Some arrange to have the poor writers put in some extra time before or after school. Some of the regular lessons may be devoted to this kind of work to good advantage. An interesting and helpful contest may be given as follows: Have the pupils in about two rows of desks write, then have the entire room vote on the best and second best work. Repeat this throughout the room. Continue this for a number of lessons. Those who have won recognition may then have a contest, as well as those who have not. One class became so interested in this work that they asked if they might do some extra practice upon paper to prepare for these contests. It is apparent that the object sought for was attained. Capitals and figures furnish good copies for blackboard practice.

STANDARDS FOR THE DIFFERENT GRADES

Grade 1.—The standard for this grade will vary according to the demands for written work in connection with the other studies. If written work is demanded in this grade, pupils should learn to write as soon as possible.

The following list of short words is suitable for a class of beginners. They contain all the small letters. They may be made on the blackboard and on paper: on, one, no, in, an, is, or, ran, we, can, cow, ace, man, use, all, he, it, hit, red, be, bad, may, joy, go, of, for, pan, ink, quit, axe, buzz, new, came, pad, vim, van.

As soon as pupils begin to use pencils and ruled paper, Writing Lessons No. 1 furnishes a good standard. The first thirteen pages contain all the small letters. Figures are introduced, also proper names introducing the capital letters. The remainder of the pad is devoted to a review, in the form of sentences, of all the letters.

In schools where written work is demanded, if Writing Lessons No. 1 can be completed there will be adequate preparation for this work.

In schools where no written work is required, the work may be carried on more slowly, more time being given to blackboard writing. A good standard is to teach all of the small letters, most of the capitals and a few sentences.

Grade II.—If the minimum standard is used in the first grade, Writing Lessons No. 1 will furnish a good standard for this grade. In addition to this, the aim should be to have pupils write from a printed copy. The combinations of letters joined at the top are the most difficult. Test pupils occasionally, using such words as the following: swim, fawn, cover, bird, build, grave, etc.

Give some sentences that are too long for one line before giving written work requiring such sentences. Anticipate all new kinds of written work and give lessons that will bear directly on this work. This is an important point. It will help keep the daily written exercises up to the required standard.

After the first few pages have been written, continue to use the the movement exercises at the beginning of each lesson. These may be practiced on separate paper, written above the regular copy or two or three lines below the copy may be used. These exercises are traced over so that considerable practice may be given on one line. If instructional counting is used, these exercises will promote good position and pencil holding.

Maintain a high standard for position, pencil holding, and the lateral movement.

Grade III.—Writing Lessons No. 2 furnishes an outline for this grade. All of the capitals and small letters and the figures are given. Other copies may be practiced in connection with the written work, as indicated in the work for second grade. Introduce

ink as directed under another topic. This, and the additional work demanded, make two difficult tasks for this grade. These daily written exercises, prepared only partially under the direct supervision of the teacher, make it difficult to maintain the proper position, pencil holding, and movement. (See directions under Supervising All Written Work.)

Grade IV.—Pupils should begin by using Writing Lessons No. 2. Teachers should be supplied with No. 2 and No. 3. Shorten the length of the movement exercises, making them as near like the actual letters as possible. If a class is sufficiently advanced, Writing Lessons No. 3 should be used the latter half of the year. If this is not done, the writing should be brought down toward the close of the year as near to the models as possible in Writing Lessons No. 3. No teacher should give the same instruction throughout the year. Pupils should be brought constant'y nearer to the next year's work.

Some practice on paragraph writing, from both a written and a printed copy should be given, until pupils can make a well balanced page effect of this kind of work.

Grades V and VI.—Use Writing Lessons No. 3. Teachers may be provided with booklet No. 4 and toward the close of the year should use the exercises and ideas found in it. Speed should increase from grade to grade, but in these grades there should be a little more increase than in the preceding grades. The Measuring Scale referred to will furnish good standards for both speed and legibility. There should be more snap and go to the writing. It should be the special aim in these grades to have all pupils use a sufficiently good movement so that it can be used habitually in all written exercises. If position and penholding are poor, these should be attended to first.

Grades VII and VIII.—Use booklet No. 4. If the work in the preceding grades has been particularly well done, considerable can be done in applying the instruction to letters, business and social forms. In most schools, there are a sufficient number of poor writers to necessitate vigorous and thorough instruction on the exercises and copies provided. If all written work is prepared rapidly and legibly, a good standard has been attained. It has been found in some schools that it is a good plan to excuse those proficient in writing from the regular lesson, making the class of the poor writers. The true test is found in the way the written work is prepared and

not in the penmanship lessons. Good, automatic writing is the goal in these grades.

HOW TO USE THE WRITING LESSONS

The Writing Lessons contain the three kinds of work mentioned in the fore part of this manual. Exercises that promote movement, exercises that are helpful in controlling this movement so as to adapt it to actual writing, and copies furnishing practice in actual writing of words, sentences and paragraphs. They were not meant to be used by taking up the pages in rotation. No teacher is likely to do good work in any subject who simply turns to one page to-day and the next one to-morrow. The Writing Lessons were made so that thought and judgment are necessary in planning the lessons. The copies selected will depend upon the condition of the writing in the class. The lesson may be begun with some of the first copies and completed by practice on more advanced copies, as outlined in the topic, "The Writing Lesson."

The small booklets of copies may be placed to one side of the practice paper or directly upon it. The size of the copies make them convenient to use with the small desks used in the grades. They can be carried home easily for extra practice.

Writing Lessons No. 1 is made in pad form, as it is more difficult for young children to handle copies and paper separately and maintain a good position.

In placing the booklets of copies on the practice paper, the pupils' writing should be covered so that the mistakes made will not be copied. This is an important feature of these copies. By placing the copies close to the writing a rigid comparison can be made. It will be easy to determine if the writing is too large, or too small; if the spacing is too wide or too narrow; if the margins are like the model, etc.

It is helpful to have paper the same width as the length of the booklets of copies. The width of ruling for the paper is given in another part of the Manual.

The vertical lines in a number of the copies indicate a good device of turning the paper half way around and writing across the lines. This is particularly helpful in training the hand to move easily and continuously across the page. A number of spaces may be omitted between the letters as indicated in the copies. This work is only a means to an end and should not be continued longer than neces-

sary. This is true also of other kinds of instruction. Many teachers make an end of a means, continuing practice that should be abandoned, or continuing simple exercises when more difficult ones should be given. All of the practice should be as closely related to actual writing as possible.

For further directions, read the topic, "Standards for the Different Grades."

PENMANSHIP POINTERS

Be optimistic. The teacher who says, "We are going to have the best writing in the country, aren't we, boys and girls?" is on the road to success. The teacher who says, "My pupils cannot write well. They were poorly prepared and they are dull," is paving the way to defeat.

Don't fuss, taking a long time to get to practicing the lesson. Considerable must be done in each lesson if good habits are formed.

Make a liberal use of the blackboard. Most pupils learn more readily through their eyes than through their ears.

Your instruction and questions should be aimed at the poor writers. Bring things to pass with these poor writers. It is a test of your efficiency.

Persist in a high standard. Establish a reputation for this and your worry and work will be lighter.

Coöperation among pupils and teachers is too good an ally not to promote it to its utmost. Something is radically wrong in a room or a school when poor writers surrounded by good ones do not improve.

Do not be content with a passively good room. Have an aggressively good room that is really seeking after knowle'ge. If you can make the desire strong enough comparatively little instruction will be necessary.

Remember that habits are formed through the preparation of the daily lessons.

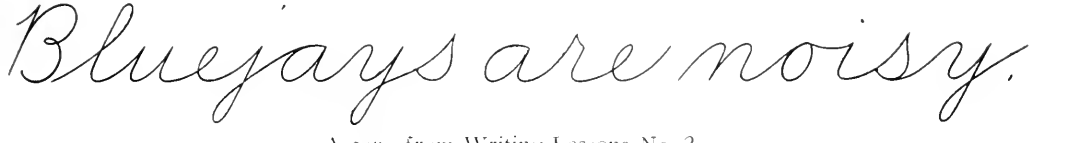
Learn to do what you expect of pupils. Children do not have much confidence in, or respect for, a teacher who virtually says, "Do as I say and not as I do."

Don't fail to plan your lessons. Practice them if necessary. It will give confidence and bring better results.

Don't have pupils continue to practice writing that is radically wrong. If this is done, something is wrong with your instruction or the spirit of your room.

CORRECT DIAGNOSIS OF POOR WRITING

1. Too close spacing between letters.
2. Too close spacing between words.
3. The letters are too broad.
4. The slant is irregular.
5. Angularity is the worst fault.
6. Poor beginnings and endings of letters.
7. Letters not closed and disconnected.
8. Too much slant.
9. Uncontrolled, careless movement.
10. Too small and crowded.
11. Too large for grade five.



A copy from Writing Lessons No. 2

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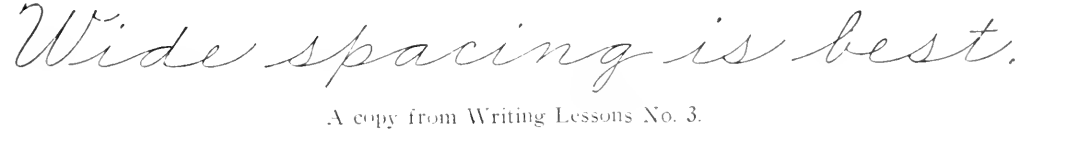

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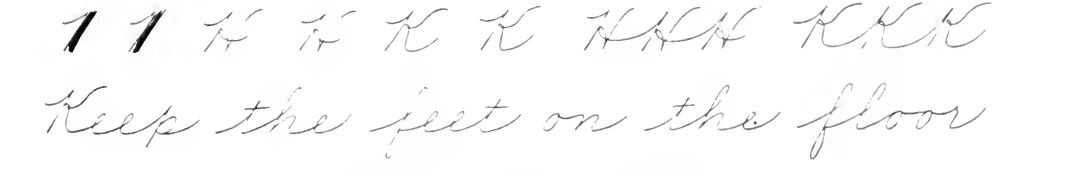

A copy from Writing Lessons No. 4.

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